



Victim Mentality: a Symptom of Doomsday Debate

It would be so easy to just give in right now wouldn't it? Everything you read, hear and see is predicting doom and gloom. I read many of the industry magazines and editorials from both sides of the border and as you know it is not pretty out there. The only solace is that it appears that it's not too pretty for any sector of the economy right now. Sorry, not much comfort is it? We have been in this funk long enough for many of you to feel like it is time to throw in the towel and say 'enough is enough!' I hear it over and over and I totally understand the sentiment. Should I give up now and minimize the damage and the stress? This is a question many owner operators are asking themselves right now, and fair enough if you feel you can't go on.

What I have a problem with is this victim mentality that I hear; the 'everyone is picking on me crap' gets a little old for me after awhile. Believe it or not, some groups actually fuel it and incite it for their own purposes. Yes folks, there are groups who actually feed off misery. They will pretend to be the defender of the down trodden and when they can't find a bad guy, they will invent one for you. The case of OBAC versus the OTA is a prime example of what I am talking about. Freight is tight and cheap right now, so join OBAC and

we'll get those rotten OTA members; I don't get enough FSC (fuel surcharge), so join OBAC and we'll get those rotten company owners; I am not making enough money, so join OBAC because we know it's the OTA members and the rest of the company owners who are screwing you and we'll get them for you. What a crock and I am sick of hearing it, reading it, and seeing it.

I believe that there is a space in this industry for an Owner Operators Association and that it should be filled with competent representation. Owner Operators have unique issues and they are independent business people who represent a significant sector of this industry and they are vitally important to the transportation industry as a whole. So why would a group who supposedly represent the face of the Owner Operator make their sole effort for their membership to discredit the OTA? I'll tell you why, because they need a bad guy to point at and blame for all the bad things that have happened to their prospective members. It doesn't fix jack. It doesn't serve any purpose but to foster a victim mentality and allow them to pretend that they are doing something concrete for their membership dollars, besides just funding their own positions and their need for exposure.

Don't get me wrong here. I have my

own issues with many of the OTA's policies, and I have written about some of them in this column and have talked directly to decision makers about many others. Here is the plain truth though folks: the OTA/CTA head off more bone head policy makers and their hair brain ideas about our industry in our government than most of us will ever know. Have no doubt that without OTA/CTA we would be in far worse shape than we are, speed limiters or no speed limiters. One major issue I have had with the OTA/CTA is that they do not promote the many, many battles they do win for this industry loud enough! Enough said here, I didn't write this column to defend OTA/CTA; they can do that just fine on their own, just look at the record. As far as the trucking companies go, if you are an Owner Operator and you don't know who your customer is let me clue you in; as with any business anywhere, it is the person, company or business that signs your cheque, period. This is a free market economy and if you believe that you are being cheated in your current business arrangement and have done your due diligence, then move on. I have written previous columns in this magazine about how to find the right carrier and I again encourage you to do so. Are there bad companies out there you should avoid? Of course. Do they represent the majority of the industry or the OTA/CTA? Of course not, that's a ridiculous premise designed once again to feed a victim mentality.

Effective representation of a group

of small businesses has to be more than just a few ex-bureaucrats who revolt against the big bad establishment and represents themselves as the defender of the down trodden proletariat. I believe that effective leadership would try their best to work in cooperation with the provincial and federal associations. Please reread the "work with" piece again; I did not say go along for the ride or be puppets. It starts with identifying the critical issues that can be enacted to benefit the working relationship with Owner Operators and their carriers, or using the associations lobbying expertise to effect governmental legislative change to its memberships benefit. What it is not, is to protest for protest sake. We get more than enough of this from groups like CRASH or Public Citizen, who work vehemently against any trucking initiative that might benefit the industry, without fighting against our own.

Although I have never been shy about sharing my thoughts on any subject related to this industry, I have not written about this particular issue because I know that in doing so, it gives light to a group that I do not believe is effective in its direction or its tactics, other than to the trucking industry's detriment and their own selfish purpose.

Just my two cents worth folks, please feel free to send me all the Haight mail I deserve at the address below. Thanks again and safe trucking.
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